

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 94
By Fitzhugh

A RESOLUTION to congratulate the pastors and members of the
Ripley First Baptist Church upon the celebration
of their sesquicentennial anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional
foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans; their dedicated service to God
and humanity is the bedrock characteristic upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to recognize those communities of faith
which have celebrated important milestones in their communal life; and

WHEREAS, one such vibrant congregation is the Ripley First Baptist Church, which last
year celebrated 150 years as a congregation in its sesquicentennial observance; and

WHEREAS, during the winter of 1852-53, a few Baptist believers met in the Lauderdale
County Courthouse to organize the Ripley First Baptist Church; in April of 1857, the county gave
a building lot to the "Missionary" Baptist Church under the condition that a church building would
be constructed within two years. The present church building stands on that same lot; and

WHEREAS, in 1888-89, the original frame structure was razed and a new church building was constructed at a cost of \$7,000; dedicated on July 1, 1889, the new structure was paid for by the end of the year; and

WHEREAS, following a number of additions and remodeling projects, the 1889 building was torn down to allow construction of the present edifice, which was completed and dedicated in 1963 at a cost of \$195,982.20; and

WHEREAS, in 1946, a temporary educational building was erected adjacent to the church; it was called the "Silver Barn" and contained kitchen facilities and classrooms that could be expanded into a dining area. That educational building was later demolished and was replaced by the present educational building which was dedicated in 1954; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, the First Baptist Church completed construction of its Family Life Center, dedicated it the following year, and paid it off in full in July of 2000; the Family Life Center contains a kitchen, dining room area, Nursery School facilities, gymnasium, racketball court, and various classrooms; and

WHEREAS, during its long and significant history, Ripley First Baptist Church has been fortunate to enjoy the leadership of a number of pastors, including its first pastor, Joseph Henry Borum, whose pastorate from 1853 to 1876 was interrupted by the pastorates of Spencer King Melton, V.D.M.; Champ Carter Conner, D.D.; and J.B. Butler. Other pastors included: E.C. Faulkner, 1876-90; R.L. Motley, 1890-91; R.L. Bowman, 1891-94; T.W. Hart, 1894-98; L.W. Sloan, 1898-1901; W.H. Burton, 1901-09; C.E. Wauford, 1909-10; G.B. Smalley, 1910-14; J.W. Storer, 1914-17; A.F. Gordon, 1917-19; F.J. Harrell, 1920-21; Leonard O. Lavell, 1922-26; R.R. McCulloch, 1927-29; O. Olin Green, D.D., 1929-37; James L. Sullivan, 1937-41; Chesley L. Bowden, 1942-52; Bernard A. Scates, 1952-70; John F. May, 1970-72; Paul W. Woodford, 1972-81; Dean Doster, 1982-83; Dennis Pulley, 1983-90; Randall Cummings, 1991-2000; and Lyle Larson, 2001 to the present; and

WHEREAS, Ripley First Baptist Church has always regarded itself as involved in missionary work both locally and abroad; it has sent out such dedicated workers as Mrs. Corinne Pearson James as a missionary to China, Billy Bickers as a missionary to Peru, Mrs. Edna Hutcheson Randolph as a city mission worker, Melissa Morris Tiebout as a home missionary, Robbie Smith as a teacher to missionary children in South Korea, and Loretta Young as a missionary to Brazil. The church has also produced several pastors and ministers of music, including Jimmy Clay, Dunaway Conner, Jimmy Drumwright, and John Leonard Tolbert; and

WHEREAS, the programs of Ripley First Baptist Church grew along with its membership and physical plant; the Women's Missionary Union was organized during the Reverend Faulkner's pastorate, with four charter members, the Men's Bible Class was organized in 1916 under the Reverend Storer with 16 charter members, the first paid church secretary and the first paid organist and choir director were employed during the Reverend Chesley L. Bowden's pastorate, in September 1920, the T.E.L. (Timothy, Eunice, and Lois) Class was organized with 18 charter members, a Brotherhood was organized in 1946, and the church sponsored a Boy Scout troop and its Training Union flourished; and

WHEREAS, the members of Ripley First Baptist Church are fortunate to be served by a dedicated and highly motivated ministerial staff, including Senior Pastor Lyle P. Larson and his wife, Susan, who came in 2001; Associate Pastor, Minister of Music and Education, David Keith Elkins who arrived in 1984 and his wife, Shirley; and David Kevin Kees, who arrived in March of 2002, and his wife, DeeDee; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate and fitting that the members of this General Assembly join with that great cloud of witnesses, both living and dead, who constitute that community of faith known as Ripley First Baptist Church, in remembering and honoring 150 years of dedicated and fruitful work in the vineyards of the Lord; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED
THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE
CONCURRING, That we congratulate the members and pastors of Ripley First Baptist Church
upon the recent celebration of their sesquicentennial anniversary, and thank them for the
century and a half of selfless and unstinting service to God, their community, and the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared
for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.